

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1893.

IN SESSION AT OTTAWA.

CANADA'S HOUSE OF COMMONS AND ITS OCCUPANTS.

Pen Pictures of Some of the Leading Politicians of the Day—Men of Whom Everybody Hears—Their Style as Leaders and Speakers in the Debates.

The Canadian house of commons is made up of 115 members, and the chamber in which they sit in Ottawa has just that many seats. Two members sit together at a double desk. The desks are much like those used in our public schools, and at times the members are like incorrigible children, upon which occasions the speaker shouts out "or-der" and they become placid. Supporters of the government sit to the right of the speaker; but as there are an equal number of seats to his right and to his left, and as the present government has a majority of about sixty, there is an overflow of members who occupy seats upon the opposition side, near the bar of the house, which is directly opposite the speaker. The house, during session, meets at three o'clock or a few minutes after. Prayers are the first order of the day. They are read by the speaker, and the members all stand during this religious function. The public are not admitted until after prayers. Then the doors of the galleries are thrown open. Unless there is a very exciting debate going on it is an easy matter to get a seat, for unlike the Imperial house of commons, ample provision has been made for spectators.

The speaker's gallery is the great vantage point for visitors. It is directly opposite the speaker himself, and to secure admission thereto, you must button-hole a member, who whispers to the speaker, who in his turn sends a page to escort you to a seat. From the speaker's gallery the onlooker can command an equally good view of the leaders of the government and the leaders of the opposition. He will naturally look first for the premier, and allowing that there is a full house, the portly form of Sir John Thompson is quickly discerned. He occupies a seat which was for very many years used by Sir John A. MacDonald, on the front row of the government side, the third desk from the speaker's chair. With the premier sits Mr. Foster. On their left in the same row are Sir Adolphe Caron and Mr. Costigan. The members of the Cabinet, who are of the House of Commons, form a small irregular phalanx of their own around and back of the Premier and the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Laurier is a very striking figure in the House. He sits directly opposite the Premier. He has a tall, lithe, graceful figure, a clean shaven face full of expression and vivacity, excepting when he is very tired, and then he looks wearied and worried. Mr. Mills, called the "philosopher" from Bothwell, sits with the leader of the opposition; while the adorning desk to the left is filled by Mr. Davies of Prince Edward Island, and Sir Richard Cartwright. The oratorical ability in the House of Commons is probably not up to the standard of excellence which it attained shortly after confederation. All in all, Mr. Laurier is par excellence the orator of the day. He speaks English of the purest, and the slight French pronunciation has rather a charm for the ear than otherwise. When he is very much in earnest he simply carries the house with him, and on resuming his seat his opponents even can scarce refrain from cheering. A most indefatigable reader and student, Mr. Laurier is at home on all constitutional questions, and his knowledge of English history and of the English constitution is truly remarkable for one whose early associations must have been almost entirely French.

Sir John Thompson is the judge in everything. His defence of the government is made in a judicial spirit, and when he sentences the opposition to perpetual political oblivion, he does it with a gravity well becoming a judge pronouncing the death penalty on a poor wretch condemned to the gallows. Sir John speaks deliberately, and his speeches need no "dressing up" by the reporter. Sir Richard Cartwright or the "night of the rufel countenance" as he is frequently called, has a standing quarrel against the government individually and collectively. He has a voice which reminds one of those ancient bulls of Basan, and in sarcasm and invective, Sir Richard is not easily surpassed.

The leading liberal from the Maritime Provinces is Mr. Davies from Prince Edward Island, a past premier of that province. Indeed, most of the members who sit in the Federal House, from the Island, seem to have been at one time or another premiers or at any rate members of the provincial government. Mr. Davies is a man of most genial appearance, and he is as genial as he looks, outside the house; but once in the chamber, and in debate he is quite a Rupert. He bears nothing, and will attack any opponent upon any question. Without doubt he is a clever man and in the chances for leadership stands next Mr. Laurier. In debate he gets too much excited, however, slams his desk furiously upon any or no provocation, and works him-

self into a terrible state of indignation sometimes over questions, which, it would appear to the onlooker, could better be dealt with in a quieter spirit. Mr. Mills of Bothwell, who held a portfolio under Mr. MacKenzie, is the student of the party, and it is his delight to get the house involved in a constitutional tangle. Then he quotes precedent from the time of King Alfred or earlier and it is always a relief to members of the press gallery when he gets down to such a late period as the reign of Henry VIII, for the end of his speech is in view. But, Mr. Mills is not a bore. On the contrary, he is a most learned man, and a speaker whose remarks are always well worth listening to, and thinking about. Mr. Laurier, Mr. Davies, Sir Richard Cartwright and Mr. Mills form a very powerful quartette, and it taxes all the ability in the conservative ranks to meet them in debate. Two able assistants are Mr. Patterson, of Brant, and Mr. Charlton, of South Norfolk. Mr. Charlton is a man with strong convictions on the prohibition and Sabbath observance questions, and it is an open secret that his political friends think he brings these questions forward too prominently when he would be better and more profitably employed in tariff criticism. A great lumberman, Mr. Charlton's remarks upon that industry are always to the point. He is an out and out free trader, and thinks protection quite as much a curse as intemperance and running street cars on Sunday.

Crossing for a moment to the government side we have next to the premier, Mr. Foster, whose ability and record are too well known in this province to need much comment. As a finance minister he has been pronounced very good by competent and impartial critics; but his skin has not yet become so thick that he does not quake in his boots when Sir Richard glares across the floor at him, and asks some question about the last loan made in London, which it may not be quite convenient from a government standpoint to reply to.

One of the ablest of the present ministry is Mr. Haggart. His name is John but no one has ever been particular to designate him as "honest" John. They used to say he was inclined to be indolent. He rarely gets "rattled" and is a capital hand at replying to questions almost invariably giving a great deal more information in his reply than the question has called for.

Sir Adolph Caron is a mystery. No body knows what particular use he is to the country; but gossips say the party find him a convenient man to have on an emergency, especially when, as in the recent instance of the Clark Wallace embroglio the French members got excited and were like to bolt. It is said that upon that memorable occasion last session when the government was within an ace of being defeated during recess, Sir Adolph gathered his French conferees around him and solemnly told them that if the government were defeated there would be a general election immediately and the members would lose their indemnity. Anyway the conservative French Canadians stand by the ship. Mr. McKenzie Bowell is one of the old guard. He has been a capital party man, and some people doubt whether he altogether likes being "out at pasture" in the senate, although he is Minister of Trade and Commerce and controls two comptrollers.

The new Solicitor General, Mr. Curran, is a man with great pretensions. He is vain, and imagines himself a great orator, which most decidedly he is not. In fact, Mr. Curran and the two Comptrollers, Clarke Wallace and Mr. Wood of Brockville, have been appointed by stress of political exigencies, and add nothing to the strength of the party, while they mean additional taxation to the country. The younger Tupper has ability and great determination, and while his appointment to the cabinet at the time savored of nepotism, his career since then has fully justified that appointment. Mr. Daly, the new Minister of the Interior, is young and cheery, and made no particular mark for himself last session. But he has had a successful career out West, and has ample opportunity to prove himself a useful man. The Minister of Militia, Mr. Patterson of Huron, is a quiet, gentlemanly, easy-going member, popular with his political opponents as well as his friends—a good man in a strong, but not in a weak government.

The striking character in the house just now is Mr. D'Alton McCarthy. He holds the proud position of leader of the bar in Ontario, and half a minute's advice from him is a costly purchase. He is one of the "brainiest" looking of the members, and when he speaks to a question he cares not whose toes he hurts. At present Mr. McCarthy is a political Ishmael, but he doesn't appear to object to the character. The French Canadians love him as "the devil loves holy water," to use a homely phrase. Mr. McCarthy is very effective both as a parliamentary and a stump speaker, and if he makes a tour, as he promises to do, through New Brunswick this autumn, it will be altogether surprising if he fails to make a decidedly favorable impression. TOM.

OF POLITICAL WOBBLERS.

TWO KINDS OF THEM TO BE FOUND IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

One of Them is in Parliament and the Other Puts Him There—Men Who Imagine They Shape the Destiny of the Country—Reflections on Both Kinds.

The political wobbler is not a stranger in this great, and more purely political than politically pure electoral division of our own Canadian Home, but he isn't a success if he cannot excel the celebrated Baron Munchausen, of veracious memory, in the art of exaggeration; and his ability is measured by the promises he makes prior to an election, and the plausible manner in which he squirms out of their fulfillment afterwards.

There are two kinds of him to be discussed here, to wit, the kind in parliament, and the kind that puts him there or thinks he does. The life of the political wobbler who goes to parliament is one of dissimulation. His every breath is inhaled from an atmosphere of pretence; and while he smiles pleasantly, and courteously listens to the prayers and the threats of those who try to make him believe they have elected him, he forms an estimate of mankind, based on the sincerity of those important party hacks, and on personal attributes; and he thinks that like himself and his wire-pulling friends, most persons are not remarkably honest.

He is usually a failure in the calling or profession in which he first essays to earn his bread. If he has studied physic, his patients are well rid of a quack whose prescriptions would have been dangerous. If he has studied law, place him as one of the failures at the bar, who succeeds on the bench, or the rostrum, or the stump. If he has ever engaged in trade, his creditors ought to rejoice that he is removed beyond the realms of active commercial pursuits. If he has followed a mechanical occupation, you may safely wager your collateral that in his person is embodied the talent necessary to equip the botch; and as one of America's humorists gets the credit of having said, he is a man that knows a great many things, but a great many things that he knows aren't so.

He is often a ready speaker; and a curious fact in his connection is, that after jumping the fence for, perhaps, the third time, he gets people to listen to his eloquent diction; which if used for patriotic purposes instead of for selfish ends, would probably confer lasting benefits on his country and reflect merited fame on his labor. After his transition from one political fortress to the other, knowing the vulnerable spots in the fortifications of his whilom compatriots, he is enabled to direct his armature scientifically; and deliver volley after volley of cannonist and grape, and round shot and shell against their citadels with telling effect; and strange to say, his new friends applaud these attacks, forgetting that it is only a question of time, unless he can be shelved on the bench or roosted on the perch of a fat collectorship, until his great guns are trailed against themselves and fired with deadly precision. Despite the local historical examples of his ability, which abound here, there are suffragists amongst us, supposed to be in full possession of their faculties, who are deluded to listen to his declamations; to ovate him, to nominate him as a candidate; to vote for him, and sometimes to elect him to parliament or on delegation, while the tired and trusty party follower's claims are set aside; his former services ignored, and he is sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, or some equally high sounding substitute for fair-play.

The political wobbler is the most practical of practical politicians, for he directs all his energy to the process of self-aggrandizement. If his manipulations are successful, he is invariably rewarded by substantial favors, which he is willing the rest of his fellow subjects should contribute towards. When sitting in the legislative halls of his country, he represents himself so ably, that though his enemies may charge he neglects his public duties, they cannot, consistently with truth, taunt him with overlooking an opportunity of personal advancement; nor of letting the main chance sink below the limits of his boodle horizon. If he votes under dictation; is not famous for political probity; or if his statesmanship is not always apparent, his parliamentary operations are often profitable. He is perhaps the outcome of the political conditions of our colonyhood; there is no mistake about his being here; he is seldom what his outward indications make him appear; he is never a harmless nonentity, and is often a dangerous success; that is to say, dangerous to the best interests of the community upon which the temporizing, and perhaps well meaning but shortsighted party managers saddle him.

The other phase of the political wobbler in full operation here, has not a seat in parliament; yet he takes a hand in shaping the destiny of the country. He is usually possessed, or pretends to be, of a superabundance of loyalty, and wraps himself up in the folds of the old flag, and behaves

fairly well while attached to the majority, and the state is run to his approval; but he grows restless and his loyalty becomes bendable, when the policy of our law makers is not shaped in accord with his views of what should, or should not be. His loyalty is, so to say, a contingent commodity, that fluctuates in value like any other article of merchandise. He may not soar beyond the dignified position of a "ward heeler," but if his story is to be believed, the influence he wields, and the patronage he controls are boundless. He is the power behind the throne; and he guides the ship of state from the precincts of some dusty counting room, or the purlieus of some dingy cobbler's shop wherein congregate, to discuss international and home affairs, a half dozen kindred spirits, co-equal in importance to himself; and here is settled whether or no a retaliatory policy should not be adopted against McKinleyism; or it is determined who shall fill a vacancy among their justiceships; a janitorship in the post office; a foremanship on the customs house; or an oiership in the round-house. He assumes and lets it be known that he has what is called "the pull" with more than one cabinet minister; and as a consequence he is sought after by those gullible, but loyal and independent voters, who are desirous of promoting the efficiency of the civil service, by enforcing the tariff regulations, or distributing Her Majesty's mail for an annual stipend; and these supplicants he never turns away with a sick heart; he says, "Leave it to me. I'll fix that for you. I'll write Bowell, or Foster, or Costigan;" and scores of these patriots, holding warrants of competency, possess their souls in patience awaiting the superannuation, the resignation, the discharge, or the early demise of some civil servant, to make room for them at the public crib; or the creation of a new office wherein they may have a chance of employing their dormant talent for the country's benefit.

The non-parliamentary wobbler is seldom inactive. He organizes complimentary dinners in honor of the itinerant Cabinet Ministers who periodically junket through the land, ostensibly in search of light on trade matters, but in reality to preach the gospel of pap; to soothe the kickers; and to give the party a boom. These dinners are motley gatherings. The scion of the blue-blood loyalist imbibes his wine and pledges the health of the descendants of the rebellious home ruler in brimming goblets, on apparently friendly terms; or the representative of that class from which the ultra true blue patriot emanates, hob-nobs in a fraternal way with the citizen who, some allege, is loyal to none but the Pope. Social barriers are removed on these festive occasions. Persons who move among the local four hundred on the high levels of society mix on terms of seeming equality with fledgeling nabobs, who are struggling up the social mountain from the slums of trade and obscurity; and who are willing to pay so much per plate, and imagine they are honored by appearing at such festivals.

Moral: The political influence of the little managers who pretend to swing public opinion in this constituency at elections, should be gauged by their gall and inflated egotism, rather than by their ability; and their sincerity should be measured by the ten foot pole of their boodle expectations, instead of the yardstick of their patriotism. Yours, politically, MIKE.

Said By Sweet Brier.

The lot of the millionaire is a hard one. There seems to be something quite pathetic about the plea of Mr. George Gould, in answer to the New York Rapid-Transit Commission, that he "wanted to enjoy life" and could not assume the task of executing their plans for increased accommodation in elevated roads. Here is a young man, already over-burdened with the weight of his inherited millions, almost pleading to be allowed "to enjoy life." Sad is his lot. His millions will probably prevent him from taking much pleasure in life if they do not crush him beneath their weight long before he reaches the allotted span. It is wrong to be too hard on the unfortunate millionaire. He has the responsibility of the care of much more than his share of this world's things.

Talk about republican simplicity! Here are all the United States agog over the fine points of etiquette necessary to be observed in connection with the reception of the Infanta Eulalia of Spain. New York papers devote columns upon columns to the details of her reception, and for the discussion of such weighty matters as to whether the President should call upon the Infanta first, or the Infanta upon the President, or whether indeed the President should call at all. Some important authorities holding that Mrs. Cleveland only should call. Numerous other points regarding her proper reception are also under discussion. Meantime Eulalia and her party are amused and entertained, and are accorded a grand reception by the people in general. The republican dearly loves a lord and almost worships a princess. SWEET BRIER.

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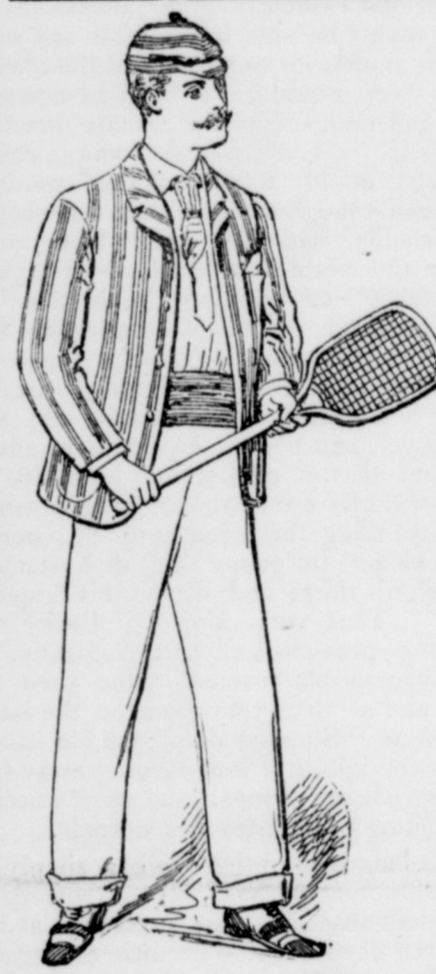
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WHO ADMIRABLE CRICHTON WAS. Some Particulars of the Life of a Brave and Polite Hero.

I believe that the only authority for the Life of the Admirable Crichton, says Walter Besant in the London Queen, is a certain tract by the ingenious Sir Thomas Urquhart, who translated Rabelais. The tract is called "The Discovery of a most Exquisite Jewel in the Mud." No one can understand what a miracle of a man was this Crichton unless he reads the tract, which is written in a fine scholarly Rabelaisian spirit of extravagance. Let me tell the story, though the beauty of the narrative cannot be translated into modern Journalese. Crichton was one of the many Scots of good family who took service in foreign courts, their poverty sharpening their wits to an incredible extent. Crichton was in the service of the Duke of Mantua, whose son was his pupil. He was a great linguist, knowing twelve languages either to speak or write; he was ready to dispute in Latin on any theme concerning mathematics, medicine, rhetoric, logic, art, theology, or jurisprudence, with any scholar who should venture; he was a master of fence, and of every kind of sport and pastime; and in the tilt yard he had no rival. Lastly, he was an excellent actor. One evening, for instance, he played before the court of Mantua, personating, in a kind of variety show, a dozen characters in succession.

His skill of fence was exhibited in his famous duel with a certain Italian Gladiator or soldier of fortune, who lived by challenging all comers at various courts to fight for large sums of money. Some he killed, winning the stakes; some he wounded, and gave them their lives in exchange for the money. On his arrival at Mantua, he posted on the gates a challenge to all comers to engage with him the single rapier for five hundred Spanish pistoles to be laid down by either side. Three gentlemen of the court accepted the challenge. The first was thrust through the throat and fell dead. The second was thrust through the heart and dropped dead.

The last was thrust below the heart and was carried off the field dying. Then Crichton stepped forward. Observe the manner of the professional hero. He might have been the first. But then he would only have had the glory of ridding the world of a nuisance. He allowed three to

be killed first. These despatched, he stepped forward and placed fifteen hundred pistoles as the stake. The event you know beforehand; but Urquhart makes the scene to live. Crichton wounded his enemy in three places—viz., the three places where he had wounded the men killed. The duelist, who had the true artistic feeling, expressed his extreme satisfaction at being killed by so masterly a hand. Crichton gave the fifteen hundred pistoles to the widows of the three men, and so everybody was pleased, and the renown of the "eximious"—Urquhart calls him "eximious"—Crichton was wanted to the stars.

The manner of his death was tragic. It was Shrove Tuesday. He was at the house of his mistress, a princess of the court. A troop of revellers in disguise and masks came to the house, and demanded the right of the day to enter. The page who stood at the door remonstrated. They endeavored to push past him; he called out, and Crichton appeared, sword in hand. The others drew, and the unequal combat began. There were ten assailants. In a moment six were on their backs. Crichton pressed forward upon the other four; he just about to thrust at one more forward than the rest, when another called out, "Hold, wound not the prince!" It was the prince, his own pupil, who was leading these drunken revellers. Crichton stopped and, kneeling on his left knee, presented the hilt of his sword to the prince. Whether in the madness of rage or of drink, one knows not, the prince seized the sword, and plunged it into Crichton's heart. Thus fell the Admirable Crichton. When the prince recovered, he wished to kill himself. This could not be allowed; but his life was embittered, and his years were few.

Responsible For Passports.

A familiar type of the streets of St. Petersburg is the dvornik, or yard porter. This person is usually uneducated, but his duties are very weighty and important in the economy of town life. It is part of his business, for instance, to look after the passports of all the inmates of the house he serves—sometimes upwards of twenty families occupying the various flats and lodgings over which he is expected to exercise jurisdiction. He is responsible to the police for these passports, and must see that each one is renewed in its season, and that each person living in the house is provided with the necessary papers required by law.